

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 3436

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GH, RH
SUBJ: MEETING WITH SITHOLE

REF: (A) STATE 99562 (NOTAL) (B) ACCRA 3397 (NOTAL)

1. REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE, ACCOMPANIED BY AIDE NOEL
NUKONO, CALLED ON ME 1500 LOCAL MAY 6. FOLLOWING
MAJOR POINTS WERE COVERED.

2. VORSTER/MONDALE MEETING: I MADE IN DETAIL ALL
APPLICABLE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL. SITHOLE
LISTENED CAREFULLY. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED US INVOLVE-
MENT ON THE RHODESIAN ISSUE; IT WAS HARD TO SEE HOW
BRITAIN, HAVING RENOUNCED USE OF FORCE TO SETTLE PROBLEM,
COULD DO MUCH UNAIDED. US SUPPORT WAS ESSENTIAL TO
HELP UK DO ITS PART. SITHOLE SAID THAT WHILE HE
WANTED AND WELCOMED MAXIMUM US PRESSURE ON SMITH AND
ON SAG, HE WAS LESS CERTAIN OF MERITS OF US CO-
SPONSORING CONFERENCE. IF THIS MEANS US WILL BE
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A DELEGATE TO CONFERENCE, USSR, PRC, FRONT LINE STATES
AND OTHERS WOULD WANT TO BE DELEGATES, TOO. INTRO-
DUCING THESE "EXTERNAL FACTORS" COULD ONLY COMPLICATE
THE SITUATION. THUS WHILE ZANU WELCOMES US INVOLVEMENT,
THE BASIC QUESTION IS HOW RPT HOW THIS SHOULD OCCUR.
HE BELIEVED IT SHOULD BE QUIET AND BEHIND-THE-SCENES
TO EXTENT POSSIBLE. TOO MUCH AND TOO VISIBLE US INVOLVE-

MENT MIGHT LEAD PEOPLE TO THINK ZANU IS A PUPPET OF THE US.

3. VIEWS OF UK: I ASKED SITHOLE WHAT SECRETARY OWEN'S REACTION WAS TO THESE POINTS, ADDING THAT WHILE WE DID NOT HAVE FULL DETAILS ON MODALITIES FOR NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE IT APPEARED THAT THE UK STILL WANTED THE US TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE CONFERENCE. SITHOLE SAID OWEN HAD MENTIONED THE CONCEPT OF US CO-SPONSORSHIP TO HIM BUT HAD NOT SPELLED OUT PRECISELY WHAT HE MEANT BY THIS. SITHOLE FELT UK WAS STILL LOOKING FOR A DEFINITION OF OR FORMULA FO CO-SPONSORSHIP.

4. GHANA'S ROLE: ASKED HOW HE SAW GHANA'S CURRENT EFFORT TO UNIFY NATIONALISTS, SITHOLE SAID HE HAD NOT YET SEEN HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG ON THIS TRIP BUT HAD MET WITH AMBASSADOR JOE APPIAH. HE THEN GAVE FLOOR TO NUKONO, WHO HAS BEEN IN ACCRA FOR A WEEK OR SO AND WHO HAS MET WITH ACHEAMPONG. NUKONO SAID ACHEAMPONG HAD STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF UNITY TO AVOID ANGOLA-TYPE CIVIL WAR IN RHODESIA. NUKONO THEN LAUNCHED INTO LONG DIATRIBE AGAINST FRONT LINE STATES-- THEY HAD UNDERMINED EARLY ANC UNITY BY BACKING NKOMO, WANTED TO IMPOSE NKOMO/MUGABE LEADERSHIP ON THE NATIONALISTS AND WERE TRYING TO CONTROL LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND RUN WAR THEMSELVES. NUKOMO AND SITHOLE AGREED THAT GHANA WAS SINCERE IN ITS DESIRE TO FOSTER UNITY. ASKED FOR GHANA'S REACTION TO NKOMO/MUGABE SIDE OF STORY, SITHOLE SAID GHANAISANS BELIEVED NKOMO CONFIDENTIAL

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"DID NOT RPT NOT WANT UNITY AT ALL." APPIAH HAD ASKED SITHOLE FOR HIS VIEWS ON GETTING TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER NATIONALIST GROUPS TO SEE IF UNITY IS POSSIBLE. SITHOLE RESPONDED THAT WHILE ZANU HAS AN OPEN MIND AND IS ALWAYS OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS, CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTIES STAND IN THE WAY OF UNITY-- THERE ARE LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES WITHIN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, THE FRONT HAS NO INTERNAL BAS IN RHODESIA, AND THE FRONT LINE STATES USE A DOUBLE STANDARD WHEN DEALING WITH THE NATIONALISTS. (THE FRONT LINE STATES, COMPLAINED SITHOLE, INVITE ONLY KNOMO AND MUGABE TO POLICY-MAKING SUMMIT MEETINGS BUT ASK ALL FOUR LIBERATION GROUPS TO LARGER INTER-NATIONAL CONFERENCES.)

5. PROSPECTS FOR UNITY: SITHOLE STRESSED HE WOULD NOT RPT NOT JOIN PATRIOTIC FRONG SINCE THIS WOULD BE "POLITICAL SUICIDE" FOR HIM. HE REPEATED THAT MUGABE HAS NO INTERNAL BASE IN RHODESIA AND THAT NKOMO WAS

"MASSIVELY REJECTED" THERE WHEN HE TRIED TO ORGANIZE A MASS FOLLOWING. FOR HIS PART, SITHOLE SAID, NO ANIMOSITY EXISTS BETWEEN ANC AND ZANU. HE COULD JOIN A ZANU/ANC UNITED FRONT. ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF GHANA'S UNITY EFFORT, SITHOLE IMPLIED THAT WHILE EFFORT WAS APPRECIATED AND WAS USEFUL, IT WAS NOT LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL. HE CLOSED DISCUSSION BY ASKING ME TO TELL WASHINGTON THAT HE APPRECIATES CONTINUING US EFFORTS AND THAT NATIONALISTS WANT "TO BE THEMSELVES, FREE TO CHOOSE BOTH FRIENDS AND ENEMIES."

6. SITHOLE'S TRAVEL PLANS: HE SAID HE WILL BE IN ACCRA UNTIL TUESDAY (MAY 10) AND WILL THEN GO TO LAGOS AND THENCE TO LONDON.

7. COMMENT: MEETING WENT WELL AND SITHOLE SEEMS CONFIDENTIAL

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GENUINELY PLEASED BY US EFFORTS. HOWEVER, THERE SEEMED TO BE A HINT ON DESPERATION UNDERLYING HIS EMPHASIS ON MACHINATIONS OF FRONT LINE STATES AND INJUSTICE OF NKOMO/MUGABE TOPPING THE PECKING ORDER WHEN THEY LACK ANY SUPPORT WITHIN RHODESIA ITSELF. IF, AS HE CLAIMS, PATRIOTIC FRONT DOES NOT WANT UNITY AND IF HE HIMSELF WILL NOT JOIN FRONT, PROSPECTS FOR HARMONY LOOK DIM. WE WILL SEE WHAT MUZOREWA HAS TO SAY IF AND WHEN HE GETS TO ACCRA.
SMITH

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